



Community Planning Aberdeen

Progress Report	Project End Report: 15.2 Increase community food growing in schools, communities, and workplaces by 12 by 2023.
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Report Author	Steven Shaw
Date of Report	21 November 2022
Governance Group	CPA Board – 30 November 2022

Purpose of the Report
This report presents the results of the LOIP Improvement Project Aim 15.2, increase community food growing in schools, communities, and workplaces by 12, and seeks approval to end the project as the aim has been achieved.

Summary of Key Information
<p>1 BACKGROUND</p> <p>1.1 This project sought to build on the good work already in place prior to Covid and develop further food growing projects and initiatives across other groups and other locations. It aimed to help change attitudes towards food growing and our use of 'Food Growing Champions' who would create positive role models for communities, schools, and workplaces. The changes tested within this charter would also provide useful intelligence and complement the work of the Sustainable Food City Partnership and inform Aberdeen's Food Growing Strategy. https://www.cfine.org/granite-city-good-food Granite City Growing; a food growing strategy for Aberdeen 2019-2024.</p> <p>1.2 Therefore, the charter involved testing (catalysing, facilitating, and measuring success of) the development & implementation of different food growing projects and initiatives of twelve new and unique project partners by end 2022/23.</p> <p>1.3 General benefits of food growing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved health & well-being. • Improved access to affordable healthy food. • Developing skills and confidence around food, nutrition, cooking, health, gardening etc. • Enabling a sustainable culture that leads to an increased number of community champions, volunteers and food growing spaces. • Improved access and use of accessible and safe green spaces • Green space growing spaces cared for and protected.

- Developing skills and confidence around green space, volunteering, health, environment, gardening etc
- Improved community relationships.
- Increased interaction and engagement within community.
- Building / strengthening connections between council and communities.
- Gives the community a voice.
- Building / strengthening connections between workplaces and schools / communities.

1.3 Our project charter set out to include working with established staff and contacts to increase partnership working across Aberdeen's communities and to encourage members of the community to take the lead in food growing projects. To ensure that all our citizens regardless of their locality and circumstances have access to growing spaces and the benefits that come from those. The project is about communities – getting people involved, caring, and collaborating in looking after themselves, their neighbours, and their environment.

2 IMPROVEMENT PROJECT AIM

2.1 The CPA Board approved the [project charter](#) in October 2021. The project aimed to increase community food growing in schools, communities, and workplaces by 12 by 2023.

2.2 The project aimed to build on the existing good partnership work already taking place with regards to food growing spaces and projects, community run green spaces, community engagement, community gardens and volunteering. This included partnership work in schools and communities and with businesses. The project looked to further expand the number of community food growing spaces by a minimum of 12 in schools, communities, and workplaces.

2.3 Priority neighbourhoods were a priority and the project team worked closely with Locality leads to identify and engage with key groups in these areas. The Central locality, Tillydrone, Seaton, Woodside, were a focus for the project team.

3 WHAT CHANGES DID WE MAKE?

3.1 Our change ideas are focused on the promoting the availability of local green space for growing but also develop the opportunity for those with little or no space to still participate in some way. This was done through the distribution of seeds, pots, and planters. This enables a variety of people and groups to feel confident and empowered in growing their own food, knowing that there is a network of support, guidance available to them and being able to capture/promote the benefits they are delivering for their area and share this with others.

3.2 Several changes have been tested throughout the course of the charter project, namely:

- Build a food growing network of communities and partnerships that empowers communities to establish and run their own food growing spaces leading to

more local engagement and an increase in volunteering and local community pride.

- Awareness raising meetings and events to publicise availability of community green space for food growing, through all available platforms; how to get started; and ways for communities to identify potential unused land.
- Introducing a competition between organisations/teams to increase participation.
- Encourage and support schools to start their own food growing initiatives.
- Promote the benefits of successes and achievements of current food growing projects, as well as the wider community benefits such as health and wellbeing, new initiatives such as the network of communities and support available.

4 HAVE OUR CHANGES RESULTED IN IMPROVEMENT?

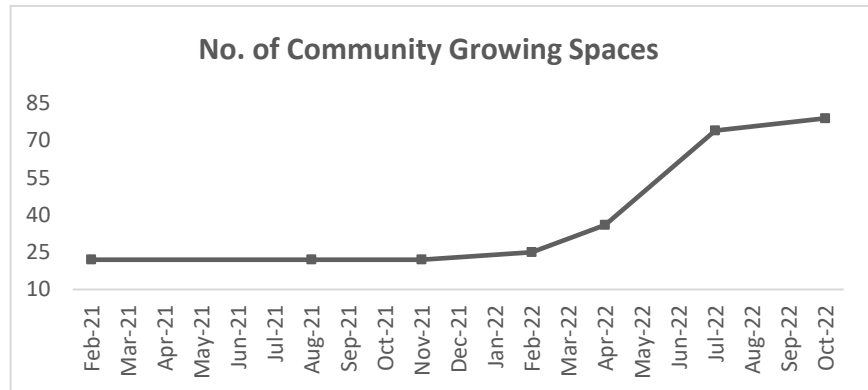
4.1 The changes have resulted in improvement. We achieved and surpassed our aim with 45 food growing projects in schools, communities, and workplaces as at November 2022, an increase of 42 since February 2022. This was made up of 17 in North, 13 in South & 15 in Central Localities. All groups are at various stages of their food growing projects. This is in addition to the many existing groups and food growing projects in the city and the huge number of volunteers who helped manage green and growing spaces across the city during 2021 and 2022.



4.2 The success in supporting and increasing food growing projects has led to more local engagement and an increase in volunteering and community pride, we also now have community champions who as well as promoting food growing, are also promoting wider sustainability issues in their communities, for example – arranging litter picks and taking responsibility for local green spaces.

4.3 Aberdeen's green and growing spaces have been pivotal during the last two years of the pandemic and have helped people stay connected with family, friends, and neighbours, providing access to nature in a time when this has been most needed for health.

4.4 There are currently 79 community food growing spaces across the city with interest being shown by other new groups. As summer progresses many of these groups are enjoying their first harvest.



- 4.5 Network through keep Aberdeen Growing an online group for food growers in Aberdeen City for sharing ideas, best practice, and resources. More than 700 members at present.
- 4.6 The second annual community growing festival, Community Garden Festival 2022, held in August 2022 was very successful. [Community Garden Festival 2022 | GC Good Food \(granitecitygoodfood.org\)](https://www.granitecitygoodfood.org/)
- 4.7 33 community partnerships registered as Its Your Neighbourhood groups with Keep Scotland Beautiful (City wide) in 2021, a 38% increase since 2020. 7 in North, 14 in South & 12 in Central Localities. Aberdeen has significantly more registered groups than anywhere else in Scotland.
- 4.8 New food growing projects are under way at schools, sheltered housing blocks, nurseries, community open spaces, community centres and shopping areas.
- 4.9 Early Years Child Minders across the city have worked on two projects with Environmental Services. The food growing and pollinators projects been in place all summer with great success. The child minders have created a video to showcase the great 'growing' they have done with the children.
- [ACC & Scottish Childminding Partnership Video](#)
- 4.10 Planters have been allocated to Bon Accord Care Sheltered Housing blocks. This is to encourage the residents to get involved in food growing.
- 4.11 Discussion is ongoing with Library Services about a partnership to grow plants and food at city libraries. 18 libraries have now registered an interest.
- 4.12 Our success in supporting and increasing food growing projects has led to an increase in volunteering and community pride and we also now have community champions who as well as promoting their growing spaces, are also promoting wider sustainability issues in their communities, for example – arranging litter picks, and caring for green spaces.

- 4.13 Through the quarterly publishing of the Green Times, we have promoted the successes of our growing spaces and highlighted available green space and support for others Our volunteers are active contributors to the Green Times, providing articles/tips etc.
- 4.14 National recognition and awards for our community partnership work ie Aberdeen Gold Medal winner in 2022 Keep Scotland Beautiful.
- 4.15 The green space now being used for food growing also impacts on the improvement project, 15.3 Growing Biodiversity - At least 23 organisations across all sectors in Aberdeen pledging to manage at least 10% of their land for nature by 2023 and at least 26% by 2026. Although the land used for food growing is small overall it still contributes to the improvement aim.

HOW WILL WE SUSTAIN AND MONITOR THESE IMPROVEMENTS?

- 5.1 We have continued to show sustained improvement with the number of new food growing projects continuing to grow per month. As well as establishing new groups, we are also focused on sustaining the level of participation and engagement of our existing groups. We will continue to encourage and work with partnerships looking to take more responsibility and ownership of their local growing spaces through our developed food growing network; community champions and volunteers we will continue with the following improvement activity as detailed at 3.2
- 5.2 The project team will continue to encourage new groups and partnerships to register with Keep Scotland Beautiful and their Its Your Neighbourhood initiative to ensure they are getting the recognition for their work and have something to work towards.
- 5.3 Project team members will continue to use and build on the learning from the project and use their experience and lesson learned when working through other similar project charters.
- 5.4 The initiative will continue to seek support from the relevant agencies and be mindful of new opportunities where they present themselves.
- 5.5 Enabling a sustainable culture that leads to an increased number of community champions, volunteers and community led food growing projects.
- 5.6 ACC Partners recognises the importance of communities being involved in their own food initiatives and projects. Officers are currently involved in identifying land that can be used to increase the availability of allotment space and community growing spaces.
- 5.7 Should it be agreed that the project is ended, the data recorded will continue to be recorded and reported to the Sustainable City Group, as well as added to the Outcomes Framework/Improvement Programme Dashboard to ensure that performance continues.

5.8 The project will continue to be monitored to ensure that the number the of food growing projects are being sustained and growing in number. All food growing projects are linked to Environmental Services as a green 'partner' and become part of the service's ever growing network of partners who are helping care for and improving Aberdeen's green spaces. The recording of the partnerships and projects is recorded monthly, and this data is used and reported as evidence for committee reports, Council Delivery Plan, Keep Scotland Beautiful and APSE etc.

6 OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCALE UP AND SPREAD

6.1 The change ideas tested have been embedded as business as usual, however there remains areas of unused land across the city that could be utilised for food growing and enable the project to apply the improvements to these areas. The project will continue to encourage and support new community groups and partnerships and will use the connections/improvements to create many more food growing projects.

Recommendations for Action

It is recommended that the CPA board:

- i) Agree that testing is concluded and that this Improvement Project is ended on the basis that the aim set has been achieved and that the change ideas have been embedded as business as usual; and
- ii) Agree that the food growing data / improvement activity will be reported periodically to the Sustainable City Group to ensure improvement and alignment to the other improvement aims continues and that the dataset will also be reported via the Outcomes Framework/Improvement Programme Dashboard.

Opportunities and Risks

Include a summary of the key opportunities and risks highlighted by this report.

- Getting the timing right for encouraging community involvement.
- Slow uptake or lack of interest from communities, schools, and workplaces.
- Securing community and volunteer attendance / participation in the process.
- Getting workplace / staff engagement and commitment at specific sites.
- Aligning the aims and contributions of different project partners.
- Getting the right skills in place to support projects.
- Funding for site specific projects.
- Identifying / getting buy in from a suitable Champions.
- Not being able to monitor project and to record data and results.
- Securing attendance / participation of schools / children in the process
- Getting workplace / staff engagement and commitment at specific sites

Consultation

Food Growing Charter Project Team
Sustainable City Outcome Improvement Group

Food Growing Strategy Implementation Group
Environmental Services
Community Planning Team
CPA Management Group

Background Papers

The following papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Aberdeen City Council Local Outcome Improvement Plan
Improvement Project Charter – 15.2 Increase community food growing in schools, communities, and workplaces.

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